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Remarks

Claims 1-20 are pending. Claims 1-20 stand rejected. Claims 5, 6, 18, and 19 are amended herein. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection and requests allowance of claims 1-20.

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1 was rejected for indefiniteness for including the terms "power shaft" and "the shaft." The first element of the claim is a shaft. The second element of the claim is a reduced diameter portion formed on the shaft. The shaft combined with the reduced diameter portion comprises the power shaft as a whole, as reflected in the "wherein" clause. Consequently, there is no indefiniteness in claim 1 and no amendment is needed. The same applies to claims 8 and 14 and likewise no amendment is needed to these claims.

Claim 5 is amended herein to depend from claim 2 instead of claim 1. Claim 2 provides antecedent basis for the term "the first angled portion." In addition, the Office Action is incorrect in that claim 5 does not have antecedent basis for the term "the first radius", as line 1 of claim 5 recites "a first radius."

Claim 6 is likewise amended herein amended to depend from claim 2 instead of claim 1. Claims 18 and 19 were similarly amended to depend from claim 15 instead of claim 14.

Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be removed and that claims 1-20 be allowed.

Claims 1-13 and 14-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent 5,318,479 (Lawroski). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Independent claims 1 and 14 require a shaft including a normal belt position portion adapted for receiving a belt and a reduced diameter portion formed on the shaft and located adjacent to the normal belt position portion. Independent claim 8 requires a shaft including a normal belt position portion adapted for receiving a belt, a first angled

portion, a second angled portion, and a neck region formed between the first angled portion and the second angled portion. Advantageously, the claims may be implemented in some embodiments where the belt can move into the reduced diameter portion of the power shaft during operation and the reduced diameter portion creates an alignment tension force on the belt that operates to return the belt to the normal belt position portion.

Lawroski does not disclose a belt retaining geometry on a power shaft. Lawroski does not disclose a reduced diameter portion adjacent to a normal belt position portion. In contrast, Lawroski discloses a belt groove 42 (see FIG. 1A). A belt 50 in Lawroski rides in the belt groove 42. Therefore, the belt groove 42 in Lawroski is the normal belt position portion. Lawroski does not teach or suggest a normal belt position portion and a reduced diameter portion adjacent to the normal belt position portion.

Lawroski does not disclose a first angled portion, a second angled portion, and a neck region formed between the first angled portion and the second angled portion. Lawroski does not teach or suggest angled portions. In contrast, the belt groove 42 of Lawroski is circular and is designed for a circular cross-section belt 50. The circular belt 50 of Lawroski is not designed to interact with a first or second angled portion. The belt groove 42 of Lawroski is not designed to create an alignment tension force on the belt 50.

Independent claims 1, 8, and 14 therefore include features that are neither taught nor suggested by Lawroski. Claims 2-7, 9-13, and 15-20 are allowable for the same reasons as claims 1, 8, and 14.

Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claims 1-20. Please feel free to call me to discuss the patentability of the pending claims.

Date: 8/21/06

  
SIGNATURE OF PRACTITIONER

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